

Wisconsin has monitored Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) for 13 years. Between 2002 and March 2015, DNR has tested over 190,000 free-ranging deer, of which over 2,800 have tested positive for CWD.

CWD Monitoring Effort

During the 2014 deer season, DNR sampled 5,458 deer statewide. Of these, 331 tested positive. The sampling strategies were aimed at detecting changes in the location and trends in prevalence of the disease. Monitoring plans focused surveillance on adult deer which are the age group most likely to have CWD.

Following the 2012 discovery of a CWD-positive adult doe near Shell Lake, 2014 marked the third year of surveillance efforts in Washburn County. Following recommendations from a local community action team, local landowners and hunters helped the department sample over 1,900 deer in the area over the last three years. No new positives have been detected. Based on three years of sampling, all information has indicated CWD is not widespread in the Washburn area, and occurs at a very low prevalence rate.

The 2012 discovery of CWD in wild deer in Juneau, Adams, and Portage counties prompted the 2013 surveillance effort in a ten mile radius surrounding the positives utilizing hunter harvested deer. Four additional positives were found in 2013 in Adams and Portage counties, while two additional positives were discovered in Adams County in 2014. Surveillance was also conducted surrounding a CWD-positive captive deer farm in Marathon County, with no wild CWD deer detected.

One important project we continue using is the weighted surveillance program using taxidermists as sampling cooperators. By focusing the collection and sampling effort on select age and sex classes of deer, the program attempts to increase the efficacy and efficiency of our outstate detection surveillance efforts. Because CWD is found at higher prevalence rates in adult males than in other demographic groups, we work with taxidermists who routinely receive older age bucks. In 2014, taxidermists in Vernon and Crawford counties provided samples, and no positives were detected.

DNR will continue to sample deer for the 2015 deer season. The exact locations for surveillance can be found on our website prior to the opening of the 2015 archery season.

CWD Prevalence in Wisconsin

CWD prevalence has changed over time. Since 2002, CWD prevalence within the western monitoring area encompassing northwestern Dane and northeastern Iowa counties has shown an overall increasing trend in all sex and age classes. During the past 13 years, the trend in prevalence in adult males has risen from 8-10 percent to over 25 percent and in adult females from about 3-4 percent to more than 10 percent. During that same time, the prevalence trend in yearling males has increased from about 2 percent to

about 8 percent and in yearling females from roughly 2 percent to about 7 percent. Despite yearly fluctuations, overall prevalence in the endemic area of southern Wisconsin has doubled across all sex and age classes of deer.